Online Focus Groups Checklist

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Pre-Step | Determine if Your Project Could Benefit From a Focus Group

✓	Steps
	Define the research topic and question(s).
	Outline the project goals and objectives.
	Set up a meeting with project stakeholders to decide if a focus group would be beneficial.
	Discuss why a focus group could be a beneficial method for collecting data for your specific research project.
	Consider if another form of data collection would better suit your needs (e.g., surveys with open-ended questions, one-on-one interviews).

Stakeholders should include members of the target population, experts on the research topic and any other key personnel.

Review the Focus Groups: A Quick Guide for tips and tricks at aanp.org!

Step One | Plan for Your Focus Group With Your Stakeholders

✓	Steps
	Draft the focus group questions.
	Identify participant eligibility requirements.
	Determine the number of ideal participants.
	Decide how many focus groups should be conducted based on ideal number of participants.
	Outline a budget based on the number of focus groups requested. a. **Incentives**: Determine if participants will receive an incentive (e.g., gift card, membership discount).
	Ascertain what video and audio platform will be used to conduct the focus group(s) (e.g., Zoom, Teams, Skype).
	Establish when to conduct the focus group(s).
	Review the list of current stakeholders and determine if anyone else needs to be included in the planning process.
	Schedule a meeting with all stakeholders to finalize focus group questions, eligibility, budget and timeline.

A 90-minute focus group should have no more than 10 open-ended questions.

If you wish to utilize a new platform, consider the costs associated.

Breakout rooms can be used to foster discussions on multiple topics at once.

Carefully consider dates, times, locations and the length of time for each focus group. If there are several moderators and notetakers, multiple focus groups can be conducted at the same time.

Step Two | Prepare and Recruit Participants

✓	Steps
	Outline the recruitment process: a. Generate a random sample from your target population. b. Establish a recruitment method (e.g., emails, flyers, postcards).
	Assign a set number of participants per group.
	Begin the recruitment process.

Keep track of participant contact information within a secure file that is password protected.

Step Three | Develop the Moderator Guide

✓	Steps
	Draft the moderator guide, which should include finalized focus group questions and the total number of participants and focus groups.
	Review and finalize the moderator guide.
	Assign a moderator and notetaker to each focus group.
	Draft a consent and confidentiality form for each participant to sign.
	Review and finalize the consent and confidentiality form.

You should consider adding an icebreaker question at the beginning of the focus group that is related to your topic (e.g., What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think of nurse practitioners?).

Have a colleague review the moderator guide for clarity.

Optional | Submit Your Proposal to an Internal Review Board (IRB)

✓	Steps
	Find an IRB and review their requirements for submission.
	Gather your recruitment material and moderator guide(s) for submission.
	Complete the IRB application and turn it in six to eight weeks before you plan to conduct your focus group(s).

Step Four | Confirm Focus Group Logistics and Send Out Reminders

✓	Steps
	Send out a reminder to all participants before the focus group will take place.
	Confirm that your video and audio platform is working.
	Check that the record feature works on the platform and that you know where the recording gets saved.

Step Five | Day-Of Moderator Checklist

✓	Steps
	Check that the platform is functioning properly, including sound and recording.
	Ensure that the moderators have electronic access to the moderator guides.
	Ensure that the participants have access to the electronic consent and confidentiality forms.
	Check that incentives are ready to be emailed to participants after the meeting.
	If online platform has a built-in transcribing option, make sure to enable it.

Step Six | Conduct the Focus Group

✓	Steps
	Thank all participants for coming.
	Have them sign the confidentiality agreement.
	Remind them of the purpose and goals of the focus group.
	Set ground rules.
	Encourage a positive, respectful and relaxed group dynamic.
	Press the record button.
	Open with a short icebreaker question that is related to the research topic.
	Ask each question one at a time in the same tone outlined in the moderator guide.
	Remain neutral and do not express any personal opinions.
	Stop the recording.
	Thank all participants for coming.
	Email incentives.

Step Seven | Analyze and Disseminate the Data

✓	Steps
	Develop a transcript from the recording.
	Analyze the data for themes and patterns.
	Develop and communicate deliverables to stakeholders.
	Utilize the results.

You can use the same moderator and notetaker for multiple focus groups.

A Guide to [Informed Consent (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)].

Most colleges have an IRB; however, if you do not work at or attend college, ask your colleagues and peers if they have any IRB recommendations.

Focus groups conducted for the purpose of qualitative research that intends to be published needs to go through an IRB.

If you are sending a reminder email, send it two to three days before the focus group is set to take place. If you are sending a reminder postcard, send it out at least a week prior to the date of the focus group.

Conduct a practice focus group run with your colleagues to ensure that your video and audio equipment are functional.

Ask participants to electronically sign the consent and confidentiality forms before the start of the meeting.

Check to see if that platform has a transcription feature (e.g., if the focus group is conducted and recorded in Zoom or Microsoft Teams, the recording can be transcribed within those platforms).